

29. Exterior Lighting Standards

(See zoning ordinance [§ 78-515.9](#), *Exterior Lighting Standards*)

The Town of Herndon Zoning Ordinance User Guide series provides the public with general information on land use regulations affecting activities undertaken by the public and administered by the Herndon Department of Community Development. It is not intended to be a complete statement of all applicable regulations. Individuals are encouraged to contact the Department of Community Development at 703-787-7380 for complete permitting requirements.

How does the town regulate lighting?

Most sites are required to provide adequate lighting levels to provide security for people and property. However, such lighting usually must be arranged and shielded to confine and direct light entirely within the boundary line of the site. For commercial, industrial and multi-family properties, the town regulates the intensity of the light, the height at which it may be mounted, and the direction of the light. In some cases, the town may also regulate the type of lighting fixture.

Is lighting restricted on residential property?

Yes. While the most stringent standards apply to non-residential uses, the town does restrict the maximum illumination on a residential property to one half a foot-candle at the property line, and five foot candles within the property line. A foot-candle is a unit of measure of the intensity of light falling on a surface, equal to one lumen per square foot and originally defined with reference to a standardized candle burning at one foot from a given surface. In addition, residential property light fixtures must be no taller than 14 feet.

When there is concern about excessive lighting on a property, a town inspector would visit the site and, using a light meter, would determine if the lighting levels are within the town's regulations.

How is lighting restricted on commercial properties?

Detailed information is contained in [§ 78-515.9](#), *Exterior Lighting Standards* where specific standards are given for:

- ☐ Hours of illumination
- ☐ Fixtures
- ☐ Illumination direction
- ☐ Maximum lighting height

- ☐ Shielding
- ☐ Maximum light levels
- ☐ Uniformity ratios
- ☐ Direction of lighting
- ☐ Distance from property line
- ☐ Hue
- ☐ Wall-mounted lights
- ☐ Floodlights and spotlights
- ☐ Wall pack lights
- ☐ Illumination of outdoor sports fields and performance areas

Any development proposed within the town is subject to the town's exterior lighting standards and requires detailed review through a Site Plan review process. As part of the Site Plan, the town staff reviews a professionally prepared site lighting plan. The town requests the following information on a site lighting plan:

1. Description of all luminaires (location, output and type) and the method of fixture mounting, output (distribution patterns), and mounting height above grade.
2. Architectural style
3. Levels of illumination diagrammed with maintained horizontal foot-candle values at a distance of three feet above the ground, with grid spacing no greater than 15 feet covering the entire site and adjacent areas. The off-site data will permit analysis of shielding effects when shielded lighting is placed near the site boundaries.
4. Detail sheet showing poles and fixtures, and whether poles are foundation-mounted or direct burial; as well as detail for fixtures mounted on buildings
5. Detail of shielding devices and methods, as well as the distribution patterns for each type of shielding.
6. Statements on the plan sheet that:
 - a. Sodium vapor luminaires shall not be used for site lighting; and

- b. All direct light rays from site lighting fixtures shall be confined entirely within the boundary line of the site.
- 7. Product cut sheets and individual distribution patterns.
- 8. Streetlights to be provided on public streets, with specifications shown on a photometric plan.

In general, lighting affixed to the walls of buildings is difficult to control with respect to confining light rays to the site and should not be used to illuminate large areas of the site.

Light proposals for sites inside the Heritage Preservation Overlay District will require review by and approval from the Heritage Preservation Review Board for light fixtures (poles and luminaires.) Styles must be compatible with other site elements and with town policies, such as the Village Streets standards. Lighting proposals for commercial sites in an Architectural Control District (generally, outside of the Heritage Preservation Overlay District) will require review by and approval from the Architectural Review Board.

Need more information?

Have a question regarding required permits, the permit process, or application requirements? Call 703-787-7380 or e-mail community.development@herndon-va.gov to make an appointment to see a member of the Department of Community Development.

Have a question regarding Building Permits or construction codes? Call 703-435-6850 or e-mail buildinginspections@herndon-va.gov to make an appointment to see the Building Official.

Visit the Planning and Zoning page on the Town's web site, www.herndon-va.gov to view the Department of Community Development web site for the Zoning Ordinance User Guide series or to access the town code. Town offices are located at the Herndon Municipal Center at 777 Lynn Street, Herndon, Virginia, 20170.

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